

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN GAVITT
BY MARK MADISON JUNE 7, 2001

MR. MADISON: I am with John Gavitt, a retired Law Enforcement Agent. Thank you very much, John.

MR. GAVITT: Glad to be here Mark.

MR. MADISON: Well John, the first question I have for you is: Where were you born and what was your education?

MR. GAVITT: I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii back in 1948. My Dad is retired Navy, so I lived in a variety of different areas before leaving the house. I got my education at Virginia Tech. I got a bachelor's in Forestry and Wildlife, and a master's in Wildlife Management at Virginia Tech.

MR. MADISON: What did you do before you worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service?

MR. GAVITT: From Virginia Tech, I took a job as a Wildlife Officer down in the State of Florida. I did try to come on immediately as a Special Agent, after college. But the word was, "Get some experience before you come on as a Agent." And I was not allowed the opportunity of a co-op program. So I became a State officer and worked down in Tallahassee, Florida for two and a half years. I learned a lot. It was a good maturation program.

MR. MADISON: And after that, did you come to work?

MR. GAVITT: I came aboard in 1976, with the Service as a Special Agent in Salisbury, Maryland. And I worked for about two and a half years in Maryland. I did a lot of waterfowl work and so on. There were different types of investigations. It gave me a good base to go from, not only from expertise in working waterfowl hunters, but also from knowing the politics and so on. It is a very political area, the Eastern Shore. From there, I went to Sioux City, Iowa. I spent a couple of years there. I actually started a little bit of undercover work there. I worked traditional stuff, but there were some complex investigations. I did dabble in undercover work with the sale of Eagle parts and other migratory bird parts. After that, I made an application to the branch of Special Operations and I went out to Medford, Oregon and became a wholesale fish dealer. We were trying to infiltrate the illegal commercialization of Salmon out there by the natives that were taking it under subsistence rules but then selling them illegally. I worked about a year down there and really infiltrated, I think, a good number of the defendants down there. Unfortunately, all of that work, I was working eighty or one hundred hour weeks. It was just unbelievable. I never had a day off or anything. I put the whole case together in a year, and presented it and through a series of appeals, the vast majority of the cases were dismissed. It had nothing to do with the veracity or the reliability of the cases. It had to do with basic political, no not political issues, but rights issues between native and

non-native rights, and how the Klamath River subsistence fishery superseded certain things, and it got very confusing. But the bottom line is that we basically never even had a chance to prosecute those cases.

MR. MADISON: So did that turn you off on undercover work?

MR GAVITT: It didn't turn me off at all. I was very disappointed after that much of an effort. But Rick Leach, who was my Supervisor then, was in charge of Special Operations. He is probably one of the most influential people that I had during my entire career. I think the world of him. He told me that they had an informant in Fort Collins, Colorado, who was willing to work, and set me up in a taxidermy and tanning operation out in Fort Collins. So I moved to Fort Collins in 1980 or 1981, and set myself up as a business manager for this taxidermy business. The next three years were unbelievable. I was working full time on that, trying to develop defendants. I basically worked into Yellowstone National Park. There was a lot of illegal big game hunting going on in and around Yellowstone. I managed to work into that through the sale of Elk antlers that Joel Scrafford out of Billings, Montana was supplying me. I would go out from Colorado, and sell them right next to Joel. I met all kinds of people who were involved in wildlife trade and the bottom line on that was we ended up prosecuting about fifty people. We put one guy away. He got a full sentence of twenty-seven years. That was Lorne Ellison. Several other got ten years sentences, and huge fines. It was a very successful case. It was called Operation Trophy Kill. Of course, I was very proud not only of the work that I had done, but everybody else. It was a really well coordinated effort, and we got those defendants in Yellowstone, and foreign defendants. We got defendants from all over the United States that were involved with illegal wildlife dealing. The stressful part of the whole thing was not just that case, but at the same time I was working Operation Falcon. I was "John Cummings" under Operation Trophy Kill, and "John Jackson" under Operation Falcon. I had two wallets with totally different I.D., it got pretty hairy after a while just trying to remember who I was, really, and who I wasn't under different scenarios. I was traveling constantly. They both went down around the same time. I think they were both really very successful operations, although with Falcon of course, you still hear about the "abuses" of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Which I think is a bunch of "bull."

MR. MADISON: Why don't you tell us a little more about Operation Falcon.

MR GAVITT: Well, as "John Jackson," I was basically the "good buddy" of "Jess" MacPartland. Jeff was the Falconer that we were paying as an informant in that case. Jeff was a very smooth talker, and knew all kinds of people. We basically found out a lot of what was going on in a lot of different areas, in terms of illegal activity. We investigated them, and got our prosecutions together, and I think we did a pretty good job. I was very pleased with the case. The aftermath was of course, NAFTA, the North American Falconers Association coming at us with things like, "There's no market, there's nothing, this is contrived." We had it documented that it was not. It didn't seem to make any difference. We went back and forth, and you realize eventually that you are never going to win that "PR," or media battle, you're really not. You just give your best

and let it go after a while. Because you keep going back and forth and it becomes vindictive, it really does. I do have one thing that I remember. I remember picking up some Goshawks from a defendant in the mid-west, and basically leaving my pack in his car when I was taking these Goshawks through the line at the airport. I remembered that my pack was in his car. My pack had my badge, and everything else in it. I was absolutely scared to death that he was going to find it. I managed to get a hold of him, and told him that I had really important papers in there. I was praying to God that he wouldn't search it. Thank goodness he didn't, and he came back and delivered my pack ten minutes before the flight left. Those were the types of things that were going on all of the time. I was very lucky. I worked hard, and I think I did a good job. But I also knew that there was "someone" looking out for me a lot of the time. I was scaling a cliff one time with a guy to take some Leous Peregrines out of a nest in Utah, and I hate heights. We were going straight up this cliff in little toeholds and so on. And I said, [to himself] "What in the hell am I doing here?" But I survived! And it was a great period in my life. It's not something that I would ever want to do again. That was for about five years or thereabout. Then in 1985 I was selected to be the head of the Special Operations Branch in Washington. I went to D.C. and had to adjust to Washington. It was a major adjustment there. I spent a lot hours on Clark Baven's couch. Not with him counseling me, but these were nights when I never could get home because of so much work. Those were tough years, but good ones. It certainly gave me a good perspective of the CITES, [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species] from a national level and so on. Then I got lucky again. I understood that the CITES Secretariat was for some unknown reason looking for a person with enforcement expertise. Of course, this is a major international body that had been passing rules and regulations to no end and without any enforcement input to any degree. So "It was about time," was all I was thinking. Clark asked me, and I told Clark that I would really like to try it, although my international experience was not in undercover work. I had not done much of it. So I took that position, and went over to Luzane, Switzerland. Unbeknownst to me, the Secretary General was Eugene Lapointe. And at that time the United States' position on Mr. Lapointe was not very good. They were trying to get rid of him, basically. Of course, the rumors started well before I left, that I was going over there to do surveillance on him. We laughed about this after a year or two, but when I got over there, I got a very cold shoulder. It was a very cool atmosphere for a while. It was quite lonely, frankly, dealing with that. Just because of attitudes and things like that, which are understandable. If everybody knows that you are trying to spy on their boss, they are not about to be nice. That went on for probably about six or eight months. Eugene finally did go. He was ousted by UNEP, but they didn't have a case against him, it was all politics. He filed a lawsuit and got a huge amount of money back. So, so be it. Five years over there were absolutely fascinating.

MR. MADISON: When was this again?

MR. GAVITT: From 1990 to 1995. It was absolutely fascinating. I traveled the world extensively: South America, Asia, and many countries in Africa. I was able to meet with wildlife authorities there, heads of departments and so on. We talked societies and then also realize, and get a totally different perspective on what wildlife conservation is in

these countries compared to the United States. I think we have a perception in this country that everybody should be like us. We are so lucky in terms of our resources and our income levels and everything else that you can't parallel the Park system and wildlife protection over there like you do here. I guess I started to realize that early one, and that's one thing I'm trying to do now, even after retirement and working for another organization. That is to make sure that whenever opportunities present themselves, let our people get overseas. It gives you a perspective that will never leave you. I think that you come back a better person.

MR. MADISON: I was a Foreign Peace Corps volunteer. I totally agree. I spent three years in the Philippines and three years in Australia. You are absolutely right, it's broadening. I'm not as well traveled as you.

MR. GAVITT: Well then you know exactly what I am talking about. I mean, even just a couple of countries can make all of the difference in the world.

MR. MADISON: What were some of the differences that you noticed? That stuck you a lot?

MR. GAVITT: I think one is that you can't set up a Park System effectively when you also have the rule "no nothing." No hunting or fishing or you can't touch anything. It becomes a little retreat for the tourists. But they do it all of the time because that is the way they do it in the U. S. It pisses people off over there, and I don't blame them. Local people need to have some kind of benefit out of that particular park. We have concessionaires here, but the concept is just not the same. I think another difference is the fact that I have much greater empathy for local poverty than I do here. Although we have it here, I'm not saying that the U. S. doesn't have pockets of it. But if you go to Asia and start talking wildlife conservation to people who are wondering where their next meal is going to come from, that make a tremendous difference on how it's going to come across. I think that you need to offer something in return. I don't think you can just say, "We've got to save these beautiful little critters" for the critter's sake. Because many people, if they are worried about saving themselves for their own sake, it's not going to have any affect on them. I've been very, very disappointed in the increase of the animal rights movement from that standpoint. I do not put animal rights in the area of conservation. It's a philosophy. Although they don't respect people that don't believe what they believe, I respect their beliefs and don't have any problem. I don't join them. Unfortunately, the media has gotten a hold of this, and they are environmentalists. They've got nothing to do with the environment. It's a philosophy of dealing with individual animals versus populations, and making sure that those animals have their particular rights. Frankly, it does not equate to conservation or really, the environment. It is often shaded in that manner.

MR. MADISON: Let me ask you this: When you were overseas, did these countries even know what the Fish and Wildlife Service was? A lot of our own people don't, so it's no reflection on them.

MR. GAVITT: Yes. Frankly because of the training programs, and I saw this increase as time went on. You get our agents, and our biologists and our international affairs people over there, starting to deal with these countries. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is I think generally understood to be the premier conservation organization in the world, period. The Division of Law Enforcement is also known as that. Now, with that comes responsibility when you are over there. I guess that's when I come back to this business of understanding foreign countries and so on, because you know Mark, I don't like dog and pony shows. When we go over to these foreign countries, I don't want to tell them what we can do and all of our neat "techno" stuff, unless we can put them onboard with it and make it work for them in that country. You will never hear a complaint out of them to come here, or to come to Glencoe or any of the places in the United States. They love it. They are on a higher per diem, and it's a vacation for them. But do they learn anything, and is it applicable in those countries? You have really got to be careful with that. But it's an easy deal. Let's bring them over and let's put through a week of showing them what we've got, and then we'll send them home. They are going to be happy, and you are going to get accolades. But what have you truly accomplished?

MR. MADISON: What do you think is the best way to help out wildlife protection? Is it funds, or is it training in the country? Is it explaining our mission or what?

MR. GAVITT: You just said it. It is onsite help. And very, very careful monitoring of what you are doing, what supplies you are giving, and then follow-up. Follow-up is the worst thing that is sometimes done in terms of this training, I think. You give out these little nick-knacks and then you're out the door. The nick-knacks disappear, the superiors take them, or they are sold in the black market. And I'm not saying all of the time, I'm just saying that this is a problem, and it's an issue. I frankly think that if you're going to get engaged in any kind of training program, it needs to be, I won't say long term like ten years, but it needs to take place for more than two weeks here, and we're out the door. I would definitely recommend that. Because I have seen the difference between the monitoring of what they are doing, and making sure that they are doing it, and doing it in the field, versus the show-and-tell thing even on site, and you go home and that's it. It's not possible in all cases, but that really is the ideal thing.

MR. MADISON: Having visited a lot of these places, which countries seem to be on the upswing for wildlife protection? Which countries have you seen make some real gains?

MR. GAVITT: Well, I don't know of any country including our own, because of population pressures that are on the upswing when it comes to wildlife. I don't run around crying and weeping because of what's happening to the world. But in the same sense, I am not a real optimist when it comes to this. Because in every one of these countries that I visited birth control, in my opinion, some measure of population control would have probably done more to help wildlife in the future than any other measure. But no one is addressing it. I mean, you've got the Muslim religion. You've got the Pope, and all this stuff. When religion gets into it and people's deep, personal spiritual beliefs: No wonder conservation organizations won't go after it. I think the Sierra Club started to implement something within its mission statement. But it's going to come real

slowly. Kenya's population was increasing annually at 4.4%, what are you going to do with a country like that? The National Park in Nairobi, you go there and condominium-type buildings surround it. I think that even in this country we are on a losing battle unless something is done to stabilize population. A perfect example is to drive from Dulles Airport out to this area or out to Leesburg where I used to hunt and fish as a kid. You can just see the sprawl. It's just coming out. And people are screaming, "Oh we've got to stop this and stop that"! Well, we've got to control population, and even in this country we are not doing a very good job of that. It's too political.

MR. MADISON: How about CITES, you were advising them, what advice did you give them on things that they hadn't been doing before you?

MR. GAVITT: What I tried to do, and I think I was successful, was to give them a law enforcement perspective. The leaders of the different countries in CITES are very, very good at developing "flowery" and political language, which a law enforcement officer might be able to look at and go, "How am I going to implement this"? Again, this is a treaty, and you have to have national legislation to implement it. But the resolutions passed by CITES are often incorporated into national legislation. They have got to be clear. I don't feel that people thought beyond, "Oh good, we're going to put this in appendix I or appendix II, and it's going to be just great for conservation"! What were the implications of putting those in the Appendices in terms of the enforcement? Someone is going to have to enforce it. Orchids are a perfect example: All of this legislation passed, and then they had to come up with all kinds of different resolutions because of hybrids, and everything else. You can look at so many species. I think that that is one reason why Blue Fin Tuna did not go. How are we going to enforce this meat coming in? Who is going to do it? How is it going to be done? It's CITES coming in from the sea that may be unidentifiable. There are politics involved in that too. But I'll tell you, there has been a maturity process, I think with the convention, in the last several years, that shows that enforcement people are finally getting some input before it's passed. Enforcement people are not against it, they just want to be sure they can do it, and that they have the resources. And that what is needed is clear. Look at our caviar issue these days. Look what that did in terms of the resource expenditure on banning the import of caviar beyond a certain amount. It's been huge! Adam O'Hara was just pulling his hair out! And the Lab, it's been backlogged for two years because of this one little issue. It's not a little issue, but it's one issue that we really need to be careful about.

MR. MADISON: Are there some areas that are still missing in CITES that you wish would come about?

MR. GAVITT: Well, they've got an Enforcement Unit now. I was the Enforcement Unit when I was there. I didn't. . .

MR. MADISON: And the world thanks you!

MR. GAVITT: It was wonderful to see my position become an established position within SIDEZE. And now they are adding people in there. Any time you are dealing

internationally, small steps are big steps in any other world. I was very pleased to see that. Again, it as a wonderful experience, and it gave me a flavor for international work, which I am still trying to do, some. But I get very frustrated over it. I don't like the corruption overseas, and the selfishness, and the egos, and everything else that goes with it. On of the problems with a country like the U. S., is when we try to do things, there has been too much of a history of throwing money and "things" at the problems. And yeah, they take it and it goes in a Swiss back account sometimes. I don't think we should give up, but it's just tough work. And more and more, if we truly want to save wildlife to any degree, we have to get involved and stay involved and even increase our international component. In spite of the issues here, and the problems, I saw within the Division of Law Enforcement over the years: My last six years were spent in Alaska, I have a decent perceptive of what was going on, and yes, poaching and all of the things that used to be really bad still do exist, like wildlife commercialization. And we need to be working on them. But I don't think the problems are near what they were in the 1980s. Then you get into habitat destruction, and human population increases. That's all just escalated unbelievably. From a Law Enforcement perspective, I look at our expertise being needed in other countries, sorely needed. I think we are holding it together here, in spite of the budget problems and everything else. That's my personal opinion, because I don't see the cases. I don't see these big, huge cases coming forth like they used to. It doesn't mean that the Agents are sitting back I just don't know how much of it is really there any more.

MR. MADISON: Well, you were with the Division for a long time, how has "L.E." evolved in the time that you were involved with it?

MR. GAVITT: Well certainly, Clark Baven, when he was Chief started it going. We became criminal investigators as opposed to just regular Federal Game Wardens. I've seen a tremendous evolution of it over the years in terms of computer capability, working big cases. Special Operations used to be the only one that started out gathering intelligence until Leach got in there. Then we got actually working cases. And they were not little things. They were big two and three year cases. And now, if you go through the regions and the regions are doing those occasionally too. I think that the level of expertise is there. I think that certainly, computer wise, and so on: everybody's got a laptop now, and is expected to use it. I'll never forget that when I was in Phoenix, I bought all of the Special Operations guys, laptops. I really made it clear that I wanted them to start using them. I got *horrible* resistance! They had their little typewriters with automatic corrections, what were they called?

MR. MADISON: "Selectrics."

MR. GAVITT: And that was good for the next thirty years as far as they were concerned. We had a meeting out in Phoenix, and Rick Leach comes in the door. I was supervising him then, and he comes in the door with his laptop case over his shoulder. I said to myself, "Thank God, I've finally broken the ice. Someone is going to do this without me having to just crack heads!" I went over and said to him, "Hey Rick, good to see you, and it's good to see you using this." I picked it up, and it weighed about two

pounds! He had his gym clothes in it! [Both laughing] What do you do? But anyway, everybody is doing it now. Everybody is using it. If I was an Agent coming on board now, I mean, if I were hiring people, I would not hire anybody who is not willing to do this. It's part of the job now. Not only do you have to be good in the field, but you've got to be good with your computer, and case report writing and so on. I do think that from what I have seen, we are losing some of the field expertise that we used to have. I think that more and more Agents, and not just Agents, I've seen it throughout the Service; there are people who I believe their weekends are spent doing things that are totally unrelated to any outdoor activities. That concerns me. I'm not saying that everybody has got to hunt and fish, I do like to see a certain number of Service people doing that. I think they are great traditions, they helped to build this outfit, and I don't want to see them leave. Also, just the outdoor skills, and so on. I am not saying that we are losing them like crazy, but I have been talking; I went down to Virginia Tech several weeks ago to give a talk on my Wild Aide work. And these kids don't have a clue about outdoor stuff. I don't know that they have even been camping. You can just tell when you are talking to them that there is a very, very high level of naivety. I don't know how you change it. We are becoming more and more urban over time but maybe part of what should be taught in any kind of in-service whether it's for law enforcement or other group is outdoor skills. Because I don't it are necessarily people coming on with it.

MR. MADISON: It is a change. I see it when I do the New Employees Foundations course. We usually talk about sportsmen, and have people raised their hands if they hunt or fish. We rarely get a hunter.

MR. GAVITT: They won't admit it.

MR. MADISON: We only get a few anglers. I am just shocked. And then I tell the anglers that there are Small Mouthed Bass over here in the Potomac, "You might want to try it"! That brings up a good point; have you noticed other changes with Special Agents today, or closer to when you retired as opposed to when you started?

MR. GAVITT: Certainly a lot of the Agents when I first came on were hard-line Game Warden types that were awfully good at what they did. I mean, I never reached any kind of level compared to what they had. But in the same sense, it was tough to get a case report from them to read. I think that the professionalism of the organization has increased over the years. Right before I left, I kind of blasted Tim Cintell who is in charge of the Association for being so negative. And I don't regret doing that. There was nothing personal or anything, but this outfit, in spite of its problems, has it good. I mean, the people in this outfit; I would have died for this job years ago. And if you are going to whine and complain all of the time, hey, there's the door! Get yourself a better job somewhere else! Go work at Hardees or be a computer programmer. There are lots of nice jobs out there. But this outfit is a wonderful outfit and I have done my share of bitching over the years, just like anybody else. But the perspective of me starting to work with people; we shared eleven dollars a night rooms, the cheapest we could get because of our per diem. We never ate at a decent restaurant. It was fast food because of the per diem. We had to beg, borrow and steal equipment. And we got axed on use of gas. It

was one thing and another. And I am not saying that occasionally Law Enforcement people aren't constrained, but everything has it's own perspective. I look at the availability pay, and all of the equipment that they get now and everything else. I think that this is a wonderful job. I left it because I loved it at the time. I knew, that because I had been in Administration for such a long time, that in a couple years, it was going to wear thin. Not the job itself, but just wanting something new in my life.

MR. MADISON: You raise an interesting question though. You studied Forestry and Wildlife Management, what made you decide that the way you wanted to interact with natural resources was Law Enforcement? A lot of people might have gone into Refuges or ES or something.

MR. GAVITT: Towards the end of my junior year, and into my senior year I started looking into the things that biologists did. The studies and things like that. And I am not a scientist. I kind of like doing stuff that is exciting. I hated poachers. And I liked the human interaction, law enforcement aspect of it. I guess I watched enough cop shows to think that I had the best of both worlds. In a law enforcement career you have so many opportunities to just make your way in this world. And to make cases that no one else can make. I guess I just found that because of my personality, I found it to be much more exciting sounding than doing biological studies. I got this master's degree coming out, and I went down to Florida. I felt pretty good. I had this MS and I had all of this biological knowledge, and I was going into law enforcement. I will never forget: I got put in my place very quickly when after the first week I was there, and the word filtered down about my education, they started calling me "Professor Nobody." It took me down a couple of rungs. And boy did I screw up down there some. Oh man, I learned a lot of lessons. I'm glad that I didn't start with a state early on. Not that I didn't screw up with the Feds too, but at least some of the screw-ups I didn't have to do again with the Feds, we'll put it that way.

MR. MADISON: You mentioned something else interesting. You said that you hated poachers. How did you interact when you were doing Special Operations with poachers, when you were pretending to be a business man, or doing taxidermy and so on?

MR. GAVITT: It was great. So many times when you are dealing with defendants, you are wondering what they are doing next. You are wondering what's going on. You are building up circumstantial evidence cases, and you never get to the entire truth. Like, when you are on the phone with them, and you've got them, and they are telling you their life story about all of the crap that they have done, and there you are, and the tape recorder is on. I was in seventh heaven man! This was great! "We're going to up these guys away!" So it never bothered me, not to want to tell them, "Oh God, I hate you!" Or, "this is wrong," or whatever. I just let them take the line out. That was no problem at all.

MR. MADISON: Did you ever have a problem that they became friends, or that they seemed like nice guys, and you had to turn them in?

MR. GAVITT: Yeah. There was one guy in Texas. I actually stayed at his house a couple of times. He really was not a hard line poaching type defendant. He got hit pretty hard with what he did. He helped me smuggle some Jaguar skins back into the U. S. and paid a large fine. I saw him in Court when he was sentenced. Of course he didn't look at me and I didn't look at him. There was no interaction there. But you could just tell that this hurt, and it hurt me. That didn't happen all that often. But you know, we are all people with problems, with weaknesses, and everything else. And when I was that age, I probably didn't realize it as much as I do now. I have mellowed over the years. I always wanted to get the hard line ones but I got some people who weren't. I remember writing some people because that was our policy for bait on the Eastern Shore. And we knew, we absolutely knew, that they knew nothing about that corn there. It wasn't the Service's policy. It was our local policy at the SRA office. It didn't bother me that much. But it would bother the hell out of me now. I think, as you get older, and you get further in your law enforcement career, maybe it's just a product of aging some, and maturity, but there is a lot of gray out there. It's not all black and white. And people who I think mature in that manner hopefully make really good supervisors, as opposed to those that remain hard line. Because someone has got to be there to say, "Now wait a minute, we're not going to do this," versus someone who remains that way all of the way through their career. We have to be really sensitive to the rights, and the common sense needs of people in the law enforcement work that we do. And I want to stress this: I think that we have gone overboard in Alaska, with the Alaskan native situation. That was probably one thing, even to the end of my career that stuck in my craw. Just how much we have given in to the demands of people who were badly abused, many years ago. But there is an attitude up there now that they have taken because we have given them so much. I am not just speaking of the Service. I mean the Department of the Interior. The political situation up there with the Alaskan natives is tough. They are developing policy, law, procedure, and everything else, that will be with us for a long time now. I have grave concerns about the wildlife situation up there. I truly do, simply because we have not taken a firm, hard line stance when we needed to. I don't think that we are respected up there, at least to the degree that we should be. You may feel differently. That's my personal opinion.

MR. MADISON: Sure, but you are somebody who has spent a fair amount of time up there too.

MR. GAVITT: In my international travels; you know you meet with different cultures and everything else. And I don't think I have ever had any experience, or never figured I would have an experience that when we were dealing with fellow Americans that there would be this vindictiveness, I'm not sure if that is the right word. But we would come to the table in good faith and rarely have the Alaskan native populations done so. I thought it very sad after a while. And probably, that is the one area where I remain disappointed in the Service, more than anything else. But everything else had been a ball. Compared to any other job, it's just been wonderful.

MR. MADISON: Let me ask you one more question. When you were talking a little bit earlier about what Agents need, and how they might change over the years, when you

were administering Special Operations, what did you look for in a Special Operations agent?

MR. GAVITT: I looked for maturity, stability, and not some yahoo who thinks he's the greatest undercover cop in the world. Someone who is very self confident about who he is, or who she is, and if they can deal with being alone a lot. That to me was probably much more important than someone who I knew could "act the role." Because we can all act the role if we have the type of personality and want to do that type of thing. Not everyone does. You've got to have the type of personality that is "outward" to a certain degree. But I look at Kevin Adams who is an introverted to a certain degree, he is certainly not an extrovert: he did a *marvelous* job with special operations. But there is a guy who is mature, and has a good head on his shoulders and knew how to do it. He was an incredible agent when it came to undercover work. So that's what I look for.

MR. MADISON: What was the best part of your career? Is there some thing that you look back on that makes you happy?

MR. GAVITT: Yeah, I guess the most satisfying part of my career; well there were probably three phases. The first was Trophy Kill and that time doing the undercover work. The second was finishing up my five years with CITES, and then the third and probably the most important now, is when I started supervising, I wasn't a very good supervisor. I tried to direct people rather than lead them. As time went on, I learned to really like my employees. It's not like I wouldn't be hard line occasionally, but it was much more important to me to try and be a leader as opposed to an "autocratic supervisor." I think I learned that. And in those years in Alaska, I hope that I put that to use the best that I could. Everybody didn't love me but you can never expect to be. I can accept that. But I was a hell of a lot better than what I was earlier in my career. That was *very* satisfying. What a great way to leave an outfit, knowing that at least the majority of the people who work for you, thought highly of you. I certainly did of them. They were a wonderful bunch up there. That's kind of a nice way to pass it on, isn't it?

MR. MADISON: Yes, and it's a nice way to end. Thank you very much, John. This was a *great* oral history!

MR. GAVITT: Thank you!